

Please amend the claims as follows:

11/ 1. A concentrator for obtaining an enriched stream of a first fluid from a stream containing the first fluid and at least one second fluid, the concentrator comprising:

- (a) an [pressurizable] adsorption zone having an inlet port for introducing the fluid stream to the adsorption zone, the [pressurizable] adsorption zone operable to produce the enriched stream;
- (b) a pressurizable container for receiving at least a portion of the enriched fluid stream;
- (c) a passageway extending between the [pressurizable] adsorption zone and the pressurizable container;
- (d) an enriched fluid outlet for delivering at least a portion of the enriched fluid stream downstream of the concentrator;
- (e) a purge valve in flow communication with the [pressurizable] adsorption zone and moveable between a closed position and an open position in which the [pressurizable] adsorption zone is purged during a purging cycle; and
- (f) a mechanical displaceable member operably associated with the purge valve to move the purge valve from its closed position to its open position, the displaceable member being in flow communication with the pressurizable container and moveable outwardly between a charging position in which the pressurizable container is being pressurized and an actuating position in which the purge valve is in its closed position upon the pressurizable container reaching a preset pressure.

12/ 2. The concentrator as claimed in claim 1 wherein the stream is at an elevated pressure when introduced to the [pressurizable] adsorption zone and the elevated pressure of the fluid stream provides essentially the only motive force to operate the concentrator.

13/ 31. The method as claimed in claim 130 wherein the member mechanically drives an actuator of a purge valve to commence the purging cycle and the method further comprises automatically commencing the purging cycle when the pressurizable container reaches [a]the preset pressure.

Sub B3 35. A method for producing an enriched fluid having an increased concentration of a first fluid from a stream containing the first fluid and at least one second fluid comprising:

- (a) introducing the stream into a vessel containing an adsorbent for adsorbing the at least one second fluid;

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(b) pressurizing the vessel for a time sufficient for the adsorbent to adsorb at least a portion of the second fluid to produce the enriched fluid and venting enriched fluid from the vessel; and,
(c) using the enriched fluid vented from the vessel to pressurize[ing] a[n] member to commence a purge cycle of the adsorbent.

Remarks

This letter is responsive to the Office Action dated January 31, 2000.

In the paragraph 9 of page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner suggested a number of corrections to the wording of the specification. These changes have been made.

The Examiner rejected claim 31 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as the invention. The Examiner indicated that it would be allowable if the words "a preset pressure" were changed to "the preset pressure". The applicant has made the change as suggested.

The Examiner rejected Claims 16, 28, 29, 35, 38 and 39 under 35 USC 102 (b) as being clearly anticipated by the process and apparatus of Sircar et al.

The applicant submits that claim 16 is not anticipated by Sircar et al. because Sircar et al. fails to disclose limitation (e) of the claim. Sircar et al. does not disclose any actuation means for actuating a purging cycle upon the pressurizable storage means reaching a preset pressure. Sircar et al. teaches the use of a timing controller to control the operation of the apparatus. Sircar et al. does not disclose any pressure sensor in the adsorption column to provide a connection between the pressure in vessel 27 and the start of the purging cycle.

Sircar's apparatus discloses a complex arrangement of adsorbent chambers, storage chambers, pumps and valves. The apparatus is centred around two adsorbent columns 10 and 11. While air is fractionated in one column, the other column is undergoing desorption, and vice versa. In all, there are twelve valves which are opened and closed through eight stages during a single cycle as seen in Table 1.

At col. 5 lns 32-25, Sircar et al. states:

"Table 1 below illustrates a time program for the various steps in the sequence of operations based on an embodiment employing a suggested 8 minute cycle, and indicating the valve